

Senate Bill No. 62

CHAPTER 806

An act to add and repeal Section 309.8 of the Public Utilities Code, relating to the Public Utilities Commission.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2016. Filed with
Secretary of State September 29, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 62, Hill. Public Utilities Commission: Office of the Safety Advocate.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities and can establish its own procedures, subject to statutory limitations or directions and constitutional requirements of due process.

This bill would, until January 1, 2020, establish within the commission the Office of the Safety Advocate to advocate for the continuous, cost-effective improvement of the safety management and safety performance of public utilities. The bill would require the office to promote public utility safety by: (1) advocating for effective public utility safety management and infrastructure improvements and for the transparency of safety information; (2) recommending improvements to the commission's safety management policy and procedures and its safety culture; and (3) informing the official record on safety-related risks in applicable commission proceedings and assisting the commission in its efforts to hold public utilities accountable for their safe operation. The bill would require the office to annually provide specified information to the chairpersons of the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of each house of the Legislature.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 309.8 is added to the Public Utilities Code, to read:

309.8. (a) There is hereby established within the commission the Office of the Safety Advocate to advocate for the continuous, cost-effective improvement of the safety management and safety performance of public utilities.

(b) The office shall promote public utility safety by doing all of the following:

(1) Advocating, as a party to commission proceedings and on behalf of the interests of public utility customers, for effective public utility safety management and infrastructure improvements and for the transparency of safety information, including, but not limited to, information relating to past performance.

(2) Recommending improvements to the commission's safety management policy and procedures and its safety culture.

(3) Informing the official record on safety-related risks in applicable commission proceedings and assisting the commission in its efforts to hold public utilities accountable for their safe operation.

(c) On or before January 10 of each year, the office shall provide to the chairpersons of the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of each house of the Legislature all of the following information:

(1) The actions taken by the office to recommend improvements to the commission's safety management policy and procedures and its safety culture related to the oversight of utilities.

(2) The actions taken by the office to recommend improvements to public utility safety management policy and procedures and safety culture.

(3) The proceedings in which the office participated and a brief description of the testimony it filed.

(d) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2020, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2020, deletes or extends that date.